CHEMICAL SAFETY ISSUES AND POISON PREVENTION

Safety Training Goal: Understand chemical safety issues and how to protect against chemical hazards at work and at home.

1. Introduction.

a. There are many hazards in the workplace, but some of the most serious are the hazards associated with chemicals. We often think of "hazardous chemicals" as a bubbling brew of poisonous liquid. Of course, some chemicals are highly toxic but thousands of everyday substances contain chemicals that may be hazardous to a greater or lesser degree, depending on how they are used. These include common household items such as liquids used for cleaning. Even in the workplace, many chemicals are not especially dangerous-unless they are used improperly or contact the human body for prolonged periods.

b. Each year, thousands of children are accidentally poisoned. Chemical safety means preventing accidents and injuries that could be the result of contact with chemicals.

2. Discussion.

a. In the workplace, there are safety guidelines that govern the use of hazardous chemicals (see MDW Regulation 385-1, Hazard Communication Standard Program).

b. The number of accidental poisonings in the home is high. The majority of calls to poison control centers are the result of accidents with household cleaning products. There are ten rules that help prevent accidental poisoning at home:

(1) Keep all household chemical products and medicines out of reach and out of sight of children. Locked up when not in use. Medicines and household chemicals on kitchen counters or bathroom surfaces are accessible to children. Store all medicines separately from household products, and store all household chemical products away from food.

(2) When these products are in use, never let them out of your sight - even if you must take them along when answering the telephone or doorbell.

(3) Keep items in their original containers.

(4) Leave the original labels on all products, and read the label before using.

(5) Always leave the light on when giving or taking medicines.

(6) Become familiar with which plants are poisonous.

(7) Avoid taking medicines in front of children since youngsters tend to imitate grown-ups.

(8) Refer to medicine as "medicine" - not "candy."

(9) Clean out the medicine cabinet periodically, and dispose of medicines when no longer needed. If you have questions about disposal of medications, ask your pharmacist for help.

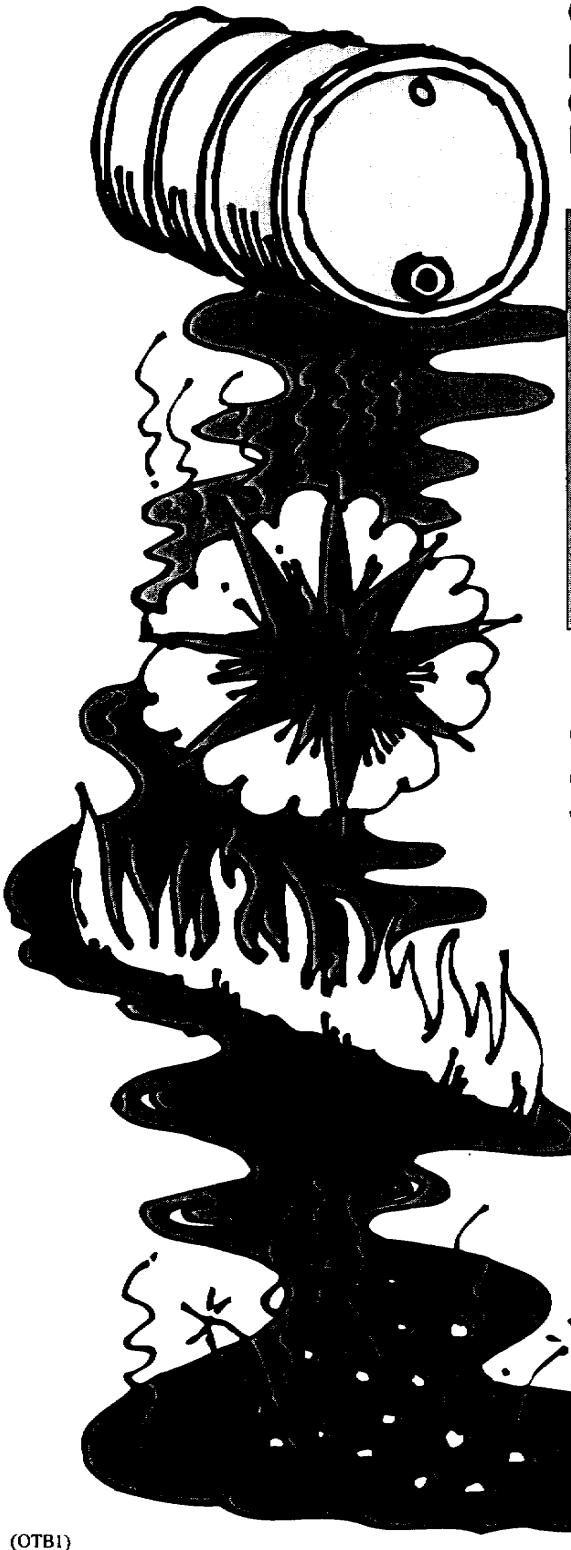
(10) Use safety packaging properly-by closing the container securely after use.

c. Last, but very important, add the number of the Poison Prevention Center to the list of emergency numbers to keep by the telephone.

3. Conclusion.

Both on and off the job, a variety of chemicals are a part of our daily lives. The incorrect handling or misuse of these chemicals can cause injury, illness or property damage. Knowledge of the properties of the chemicals you handle and how to protect yourself from their hazards is a valuable tool when using any chemicals.

Chemicals are hazardous if they



- **cause acute health problems** (such as corrosives that can burn eyes or skin)

- **cause chronic health problems** (toxic chemicals that can cause long-term illnesses, such as cancer or liver damage)

- **suddenly release pressure** (these explosive chemicals include gases that could expand violently)

- **are flammable** (chemicals that catch fire easily)

- **are reactive** (these chemicals are not stable, so they can burn, explode, or release dangerous vapors if exposed to heat, air, water, or particular other chemicals)

The Hazard Communication Standard: It's a Three-Way Partnership for Safety

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration created the Hazard Communication Standard (HazCom) to protect you.
It gives you the Right to Know about hazards you face on the job and how to protect yourself against those hazards.

HazCom has requirements for everyone involved with chemicals:

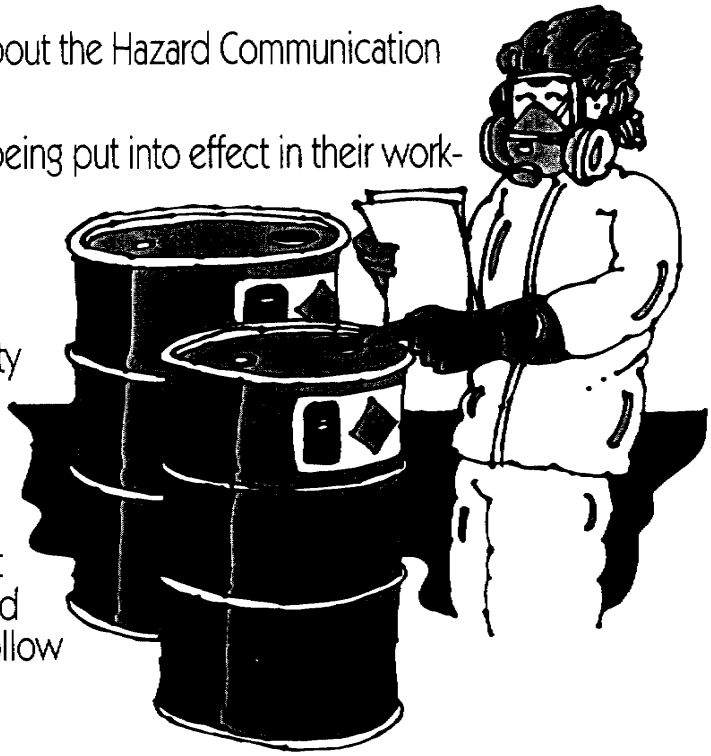
Chemical Manufacturers have to determine the physical and health hazards of each product they make. Then they have to let users know about those hazards by using container labels and by supplying Material Safety Data Sheets.

Employers must develop a written hazard communication program. They must:

- **Tell** employees about the Hazard Communication Standard.
- **Explain** how it's being put into effect in their workplace.

This includes how to:

- **Recognize,** understand, and use labels and Material Safety Data Sheets
- **Use** safe procedures when working with hazardous substances.



Employees have to do something to protect themselves, too. They have to read labels and Material Safety Data Sheets, and of course, follow the instructions and warnings on them.

Pay Attention to Chemical Warning Labels

Warning labels on all containers give you the information you need to know to use hazardous chemicals safely. Always read the label before you work with a chemical. Taking responsibility for knowing the contents of chemical containers protects not only you, but also other employees at your place of work.

WHAT'S ON A WARNING LABEL?

All warning labels contain one of these signal words that indicate just how dangerous the chemical is:
DANGER indicates the highest level of hazard.
WARNING indicates the next level of hazard.
CAUTION means handle with care.
POISON indicates highly toxic chemicals.

CHECK THE LABEL FOR:

- ✓ the name of the chemical.
- ✓ the name, address and phone number of the manufacturer or importer.
- ✓ the chemical code number.
- ✓ physical hazards associated with the substance—whether the chemical is flammable, explosive or corrosive.
- ✓ health hazard information, including dangers to eyes, lungs and skin, and risk of burns or systemic illnesses.

WARNING LABELS MAY ALSO TELL YOU:

- ✓ how to store and dispose of the chemical properly.
- ✓ the type of container needed.
- ✓ how to dispose of the chemical and container.
- ✓ precautions, such as how to clean up.
- ✓ the personal protective equipment to use with the chemical.
- ✓ how to handle leaks or spills.
- ✓ first aid instructions—including antidotes for poisons—for those exposed to the chemical.

MAKE SURE IT'S LABELED.

- ✓ Labels are required on all stationary containers. If you find a container with no label or with a torn or illegible label, report it to your supervisor immediately.
- ✓ Don't attempt to use or handle the chemical until you're sure of what it is.
- ✓ If you're carrying a hazardous chemical in a portable container that someone else might use, you should label the container to ensure the safety of other workers.

READ THE LABEL EVERY TIME.

- ✓ Always read the label whenever you use any hazardous chemical. The manufacturer may have changed the formula or provided the wrong concentration.
- ✓ Avoid identifying chemicals by the label's color or design alone.
- ✓ If the label raises any questions in your mind about the appropriateness of your environment and protective equipment in dealing with the chemical, check company policy or consult your supervisor before using the chemical.

A User's Guide to the MSDS

The material safety data sheet contains a bewildering amount of technical information about the chemicals you use. How can you sort through all the data to find what you need to know?

This user's guide to the MSDS pinpoints the sections that give you the information you need to work safely.

SECTIONS 1-2
WHAT SUBSTANCE IS THIS?

Here's where you can learn the common names for the chemical and the names of substances in the chemical that may be dangerous. These sections will tell you how hazardous each chemical is.

Sections 1-2 tell you:

- ✓ ***what the substance is.***
- ✓ ***who makes it.***
- ✓ ***what it's made of.***

SECTION 3
WHAT IS IT LIKE?

When you know a chemical's physical characteristics, you can understand how it might react in your workplace.

Section 3 tells you:

- ✓ ***what the chemical looks like.***
- ✓ ***what kind of odor it has.***
- ✓ ***how it reacts with water.***
- ✓ ***its specific gravity (whether it floats or sinks in water).***
- ✓ ***its vapor pressure (how easily it vaporizes).***
- ✓ ***its vapor density. (If a chemical is heavier than air, it will accumulate in low places.)***

SECTIONS 4-5
WHAT OTHER DANGERS ARE THERE?

These sections tell you if the chemical is hazardous when mixed with other substances or exposed to air or water.

Sections 4-5 tell you:

- ✓ ***if the chemical is combustible, flammable or explosive.***
- ✓ ***the flash point of the substance—the lowest temperature at which the chemical's vapors will ignite in the presence of a spark or fire.***
- ✓ ***the autoignition temperature—the temperature at which the chemical will ignite without a spark.***

SECTION 6
CAN IT HARM ME?

This section will explain the health hazards of the chemical.

Section 6 tells you:

- ✓ ***the symptoms of exposure.***
- ✓ ***emergency first aid and treatment for exposure.***
- ✓ ***how the chemical enters your body.***
- ✓ ***whether the substance is carcinogenic or an irritant.***

SECTIONS 7-8
HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

These sections explain what you can do for protection.

Sections 7-8 tell you:

- ✓ ***the type of personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing to wear when you handle this substance.***
- ✓ ***special precautions to take when you store or transport the substance.***

Household Chemicals—Safe Use, Storage and Disposal

Many products you use at home could cause problems if not used, stored and disposed of correctly. Chlorine-based cleansers can even be deadly if used in combination with ammonia-based products. Common household products can be dangerous because the chemicals they contain:

- may burn or irritate the skin, eyes or lungs.
- may burn or explode if close enough to a heat source or spark.
- are poisonous if swallowed.
- may eventually cause cancer, depending on the length and level of exposure.

Such hazardous substances also pose dangers to sanitation and sewer workers and create environmental hazards when they're thrown away, poured down a drain or dumped on the ground.

A Chemical Safety Checklist

To avoid any dangers to yourself or your loved ones, follow these guidelines:

- ☞ Store chemicals in a cool place out of direct sunlight.
- ☞ Follow the instructions and warnings on a chemical's container, not just for use and storage but also for disposal. Even if you've used the product before, read the label again—don't trust your memory. If the instructions are illegible or have been removed, dispose of the product safely, but never pour chemicals down the drain or sewer or on the ground. Never sniff a chemical to identify it.
- ☞ Don't mix chemicals unless the label recommends it.
- ☞ Keep chemicals away from children, toys, pets (including fish and birds) and exposed food, dishes, pans and eating utensils. Keep a poison control center number posted near the telephone in case of accidental poisoning.
- ☞ Keep rooms well ventilated when using chemicals in the home.
- ☞ Goggles, impermeable gloves and respirators are usually available at home building supply or paint stores. Use them to immediately clean up spills of household chemicals. If any other protective gear is recommended on the container, use it.
- ☞ If you spill an irritating chemical, such as a drain unclogger, on your unprotected hands, wash them thoroughly with soap and water and rinse them for at least 15 minutes before you touch your eyes, mouth or nose. If the skin gets inflamed, cover the area with a dry, clean dressing (rather than an ointment) and call your doctor.
- ☞ Avoid smoking while using chemicals. A burning cigarette or flame could ignite undetected fumes.
- ☞ Maintain proper ventilation and always cover containers of chemicals tightly. Inhaling even common ammonia can irritate your lungs.
- ☞ Have a multipurpose (ABC-type) fire extinguisher handy and know how to use it correctly. Make sure its date of effectiveness hasn't expired.
- ☞ If you have any questions about a chemical that the product's label doesn't answer, ask your local fire department. The fire department may also provide or be able to refer you to an approved chemical and hazardous waste disposal site or reclamation center.

Common Household and Vehicle Products With Potentially Harmful Chemicals

aerosol products
air deodorizers
ammonia
antifreeze
auto oil
bathroom deodorizing cakes
batteries and battery acid
bleach
cement and concrete mix
cleaning fluid
correction fluid
deodorants
detergents
disinfectants
drain cleaners
dyes
fertilizers
fungicides
furniture polish
glass cleaners
glues
hair sprays

hydrogen peroxide
herbicides
kerosene
lighter fluid
medicines
metal polish
mothballs and moth crystals
nail polish removers
oven cleaners
paints, stains and varnishes
paint thinner
paint strippers
perfumes and colognes
pesticides and rat poison
pine-scented disinfectants
rubbing alcohol
Scotchguard
solvents
toilet bowl disinfectants and bluing
turpentine
wood preservatives

Caution Toxic Chemicals May Be Within Your Reach!

Many of the chemicals you use at home are also found at the office. And your workplace may have an assortment of chemicals peculiar to the type of work you do. Commercial chemicals can be a great help in your work. But if they're not used and stored correctly, they could cause problems.

The chart above lists both household and office chemical products commonly found in the workplace.

Household-type Chemicals	Office-type Chemicals
bleach and disinfectants	inks (as in nylon-tipped and felt-tipped pens)
drain decloggers	sprayed and brushed-on glues (such as rubber cement)
soaps and detergents	fixatives and lacquer sprays
acid from batteries	correction fluids and thinners
furniture sprays and polishes	photocopier and printer toners
glass cleaners (ammonia)	
personal products (perfumes, cologne, cosmetics, aftershave, deodorant, etc.)	

Chemicals can be dangerous because they may burn or irritate the skin, eyes or lungs; because they may burn or explode if close enough to a heat source; because they're poisonous if accidentally swallowed; or because they may eventually cause cancer, depending on the length and level of exposure.

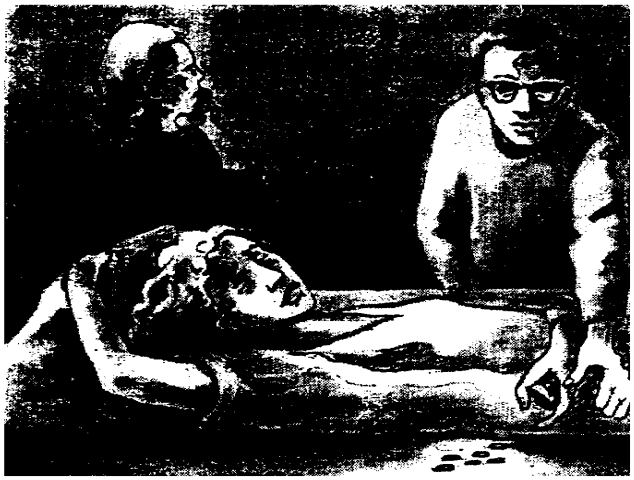
Working Safely with Office Chemicals

To avoid any dangers to yourself, your coworkers and your workplace, follow these guidelines:

- If you spill a chemical on your hands, wash them thoroughly with soap and water before you touch your eyes, mouth or nose. If the skin gets inflamed, cover the area with a dry, clean dressing (rather than an ointment) and call your doctor.
- A flame or a burning cigarette could ignite undetected fumes, so avoid smoking while using chemicals.
- If you store chemicals, such as photocopier toner, make sure it's in a cool place out of direct sunlight. Report leaks to your supervisor immediately.
- Keep a pair of household rubber gloves handy to clean up spills immediately. The lye in some drain uncloggers, for instance, can burn your skin.

- Maintain proper ventilation and always cover containers of chemicals tightly. Inhaling even the common ammonia found in many glass cleaners can irritate your lungs.
- Know where your multipurpose fire extinguisher is and how to use it correctly. Make sure its date of effectiveness hasn't expired.
- Follow the instructions on the chemical's container, not just for use and storage but also for disposal. If the instructions are illegible or have been removed, dispose of the product safely. If your company doesn't have a published waste disposal policy, ask your supervisor how to handle chemicals that are ready to be discarded. Never pour chemicals down the drain or sewer or on the ground.
- If you have any questions about a chemical that the product's label doesn't answer, ask your local fire department.

Overdose!



Treating Dangerous Drug Use

A person can overdose on ordinary medicine (whether prescribed or over-the-counter), on an addictive drug or on alcohol. The overdose can occur accidentally or intentionally and at any age. All such cases are medical emergencies. Since everyone's tolerance of a drug is different it can be very difficult to gauge a safe dose without a prescription. When someone overdoses, the intended benign effects of a drug are exaggerated to possibly fatal proportions. For instance, sedatives, which are meant to induce sleep, can push the user's body into a coma if taken in excess. In extreme cases sedatives can stop the user's breathing altogether.

Overdose Symptoms

One or more of the following symptoms may indicate a drug overdose:

- an abnormal change in the size of the eye pupils
- sweating
- reddening of the skin
- nervousness
- drowsiness
- drunkenness
- vomiting
- sudden unprovoked outbursts of anger or violence
- hallucinations
- difficulty breathing
- convulsions
- unconsciousness

If the Victim Is Conscious

- Ask the victim what happened.
- Try to determine what the drug or drugs taken were, how much was taken, when they were taken and, if not apparent, where any drug containers are.
- Don't waste time trying to induce vomiting unless you know that the victim has overdosed on barbiturates or on strong tranquilizers. If the victim vomits naturally, save a sample for emergency medical personnel.
- Call a poison control center for further instructions. Their number is in the front section of your phone book.
- Don't try to keep the victim awake with coffee or by keeping him or her walking. That only speeds up the drug's effects.
- If an ambulance is sent, give the attendants any appropriate drug containers and a sample of the victim's vomit, if any. If you drive the victim to a hospital emergency room yourself, bring these with you to give to a medical professional.

If the Victim Is Unconscious

- Have someone dial a poison control center while you check that the victim is breathing. If the victim is breathing, keep the airway open by gently rolling the person over onto his or her stomach. Bend one knee and turn the face toward the same side as the bent knee.
- If the victim is not breathing start rescue breathing.
- If there is no pulse and you are trained in CPR, start that technique.
- Give the ambulance attendants any appropriate drug containers and a sample of the victim's vomit, if any, when they arrive.

Special Situations

An overdose victim who also has asthma or kidney disease or who is extremely sensitive to certain medications may suffer more severe symptoms or may overdose on a smaller amount of the offending substance. Be sure to tell medical personne about any special conditions of the victim.

Medicines and Drugs—A Safety Checklist

Medicines—both over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription—are a part of most people's lives. To use medicines safely and effectively, keep the following points in mind.

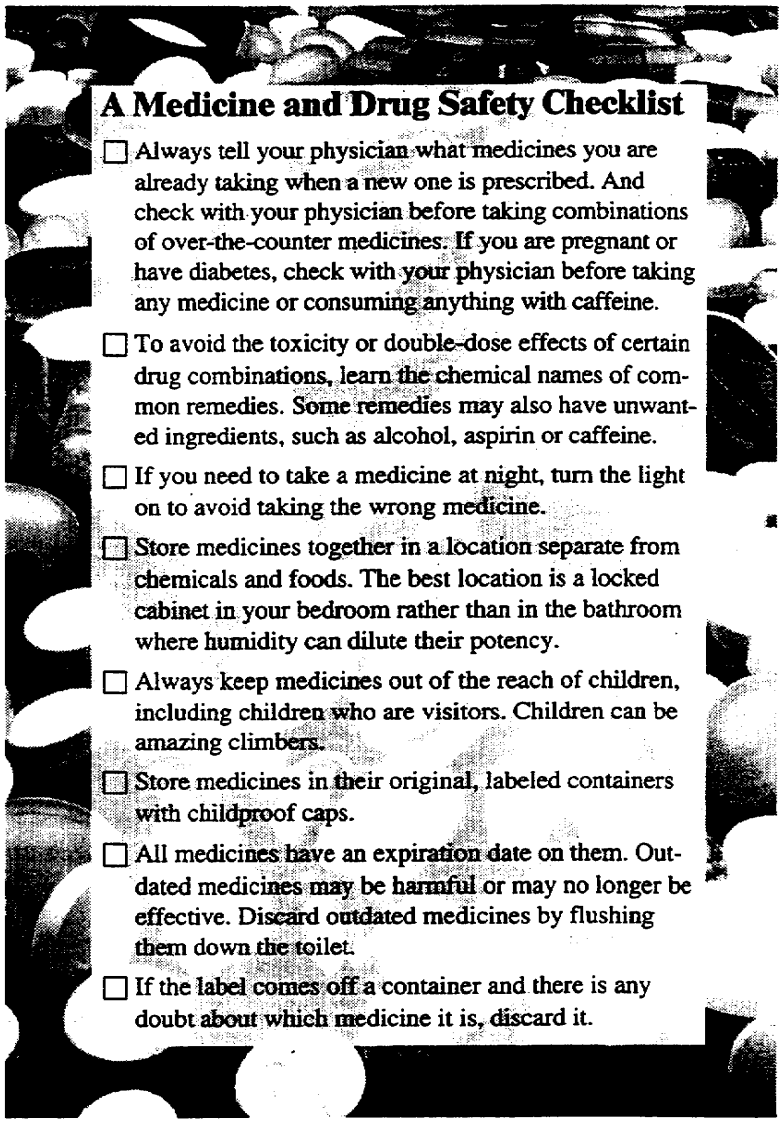
What Is Dangerous?

If two or more drugs share the same effect, they may have a greater impact together than you might expect. For instance, a cold medication with antihistamine can dangerously increase the sedative effects of some painkillers, tranquilizers, anesthetics and barbiturates. On the other hand, an antacid can cause a blood-thinning drug to be absorbed too slowly to do much good or can make certain antibiotics useless.

Some foods, beverages and activities also don't mix with prescribed medications. Alcohol can be particularly toxic. Because it's a drug rather than a food it can produce serious side effects and is potentially fatal when taken with other drugs. Never consume alcohol with a drug intended for psychiatric or emotional problems, such as lithium carbonate or MAO inhibitors.

Side Effects Can Compromise Safety

Many OTC medicines, such as cough, cold, allergy, weight loss and nerve-calming tablets can impair your reaction time, possibly affecting your driving or ability to operate power tools safely. Some drugs or drug combinations can also cause nausea, a stomachache, an irregular heartbeat, prolonged vomiting, loss of consciousness, stroke, blindness, seizures or reactions that poison your blood, raise your blood pressure or contribute to overweight.



A Medicine and Drug Safety Checklist

- ☐ Always tell your physician what medicines you are already taking when a new one is prescribed. And check with your physician before taking combinations of over-the-counter medicines. If you are pregnant or have diabetes, check with your physician before taking any medicine or consuming anything with caffeine.
- ☐ To avoid the toxicity or double-dose effects of certain drug combinations, learn the chemical names of common remedies. Some remedies may also have unwanted ingredients, such as alcohol, aspirin or caffeine.
- ☐ If you need to take a medicine at night, turn the light on to avoid taking the wrong medicine.
- ☐ Store medicines together in a location separate from chemicals and foods. The best location is a locked cabinet in your bedroom rather than in the bathroom where humidity can dilute their potency.
- ☐ Always keep medicines out of the reach of children, including children who are visitors. Children can be amazing climbers.
- ☐ Store medicines in their original, labeled containers with childproof caps.
- ☐ All medicines have an expiration date on them. Outdated medicines may be harmful or may no longer be effective. Discard outdated medicines by flushing them down the toilet.
- ☐ If the label comes off a container and there is any doubt about which medicine it is, discard it.

Both prescription and OTC drugs may be more potent than you realize, whether they warn you about side effects or not. However, some people come to depend on such drugs specifically *for* the numbing or dizzying side effects. People can get hooked on sleeping aids or on laxatives, antacids or nose sprays. Such people are abusing the medicine and may be just as seriously addicted to it as a cocaine addict is to the white powder.

Toddlers and young children often mistake medicines for candy with disastrous results. Likewise, some drugs are harmful to people with high blood pressure, kidney or heart disease or diabetes. Pregnant women (or women planning to get pregnant in the near future) need to check with their physician or pharmacist before taking any drugs.

Remember, any chemical agent strong enough to cure an ailment is also strong enough to cause harm if not used wisely.

POISONING

Thousands of adults and children die each year from poisoning. Even eating, drinking, or breathing in something that seems safe can make you ill. Eight out of ten poison victims in the US are small children. They usually can't read labels or describe what it is they've swallowed. Know the dangers and symptoms of poisoning. Acting quickly and calmly may save a loved one's health and even life!

Kinds Of Poisons

Drugs, cleaners, pesticides—even a small amount of these "primary" poisons can cause illness and death. Lotions, sprays, certain plants, milder drugs including aspirin—"potential" poisons—can also make someone ill when taken in larger amounts.

Protecting Children

Leaving potential poisons around, even where they seem safe, is dangerous. Small children love to explore and taste. At 6 months, they can open low cabinets. At 1 year, they can often climb to counter tops. At 2 years, they can often reach medicine or liquor cabinets.

Many common household items can be poisonous.

Never leave a potential poison where a child could reach it. Put childproof locks on all cabinet doors. Buy products in child-resistant packages. Don't transfer containers. Labels, especially on household cleaners, give first aid poisoning information. Don't tell children medicine tastes good. When you're not looking, they'll want to try some. Don't buy items with lead-based paint. If old furniture has lead-based paint, watch to prevent your children from chewing it. Never leave a young child alone to go to the phone or answer the door, especially if there is a possible poison in the room.

Adults Can Be Poisoned

There are four common poison dangers for adults. *Vapors and fumes* from cars and charcoal grills can be deadly. Always operate them with plenty of fresh air circulating. Carbon monoxide has no smell, color, or taste, but it can kill someone in a few minutes.

Drugs, even aspirin, can make you ill. Take only the amount directed by your doctor or the drug manufacturer. Never give left-over prescription drugs to anyone else. Read medicine labels in good light to be sure you're taking the right amount *and* the right medicine.

Cleaners can be dangerous, especially if they are not in their original containers and are mistaken for another product.

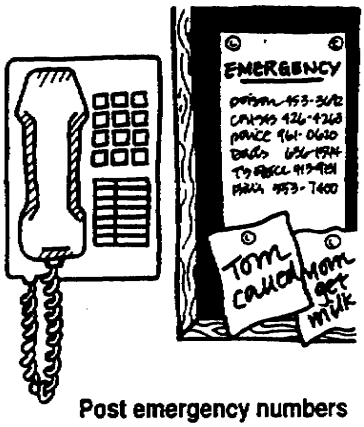
Wild mushrooms are often dangerous, since most varieties can be fatal if eaten. Unless you are a qualified expert, never eat mushrooms unless they come from the produce department of your grocery store!

Signs And Symptoms

If you notice strange stains, smells, or behavior, or if cleaners or drugs are open near the victim, suspect poisoning. Any one of these symptoms may indicate poisoning: shallow breathing, convulsions or fits, excitedness, sleepiness, unconsciousness, mouth or throat burns, stomach pains, headache, or nausea.

First Aid Now!

If you suspect poisoning, call the Poison Control Center, hospital, or doctor immediately. Give them the victim's age and weight, the name of the suspected poison, and how much was taken. Post emergency numbers where everyone can see them in several places around the house.



Post emergency numbers where everyone can see them.

Staying on the Safe Side of Poisons

Simply put, poisons are chemicals that can be fatal even in small doses. But they can be safe to work with if you follow a few basic safety procedures and become familiar with the hazards of the poisons with which you work.

Hazards of Poisons

Poisons may be dangerous if swallowed, inhaled or absorbed through the skin. They can cause illness, burns to the skin and eyes, dizziness, suffocation, confusion, coma or death. They may produce toxic gases when burned. Examples of poisons used in industry are pesticides, drugs, corrosive chemicals and gases and cleaning compounds.

Wear Proper PPE

No matter what the poison, you must protect your body from it with equipment that may include a respirator, gloves and safety glasses. Because poisons vary in toxicity, always read the material safety data sheet (MSDS) for any poisons you work with to determine the extent of personal protection you need.

Handling and Storing Poisonous Substances

- ☑ Watch for leaking, open or defective containers or hoses.
- ☑ Be aware of odors that may indicate leaking chemicals.
- ☑ Be on the lookout for chemical residue in a vehicle or in the area where poisons have been loaded or unloaded.
- ☑ Be informed about the potential hazards of the poisons you work with, what safety equipment to use and what to do in an emergency.
- ☑ To protect yourself, handle containers carefully.
- ☑ Avoid touching your mouth or eyes, eating, drinking, smoking and storing food where poisons are present.
- ☑ Wash your hands before eating, drinking, smoking or using the bathroom.
- ☑ Store poisons in a well-ventilated area, away from nonpoisonous substances that could be contaminated if a leak occurs.
- ☑ Regularly inspect poison containers for damage or leaks.
- ☑ Make sure instructions on how to handle emergencies are posted or readily available. And be ready for a poison emergency by reading those instructions now.

Dealing With Leaks and Spills

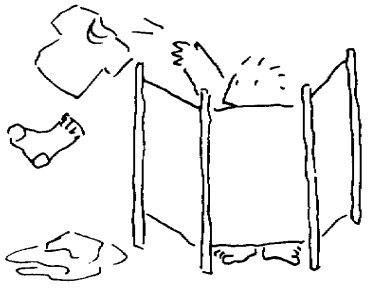
Your effectiveness in dealing with an accidental spill depends on your knowledge of the poison. You need to judge whether you can safely clean it up yourself, or whether there's an immediate hazard requiring you to evacuate the area at once.

The first priority is to reduce contamination and contain the spill, keeping it out of drainage systems and water supplies. (Water should not be used to rinse a contaminated area.) If the spill can be safely stopped, follow your company's spill response guidelines. Otherwise, report the spill to your company's emergency response team and evacuate the area. Clothing and equipment that have been contaminated should be decontaminated or disposed of according to guidelines for poison disposal.

First Aid for Poisons

If an accidental poisoning occurs, prompt and correct first aid may save a life.

- ☑ Call a doctor immediately when you suspect poisoning.
- ☑ Move the victim to fresh air and begin artificial respiration if the victim is unconscious.
- ☑ If poison has been ingested, consult the label of the container for first aid measures. If possible, provide an uncontaminated label from the poison to medical personnel.
- ☑ If skin exposure has occurred, flush the affected area or eyes with running water for at least 15 minutes.
- ☑ Remove contaminated clothing.



Call a Poison Control Center as Soon as You Suspect a Poisoning

Poison Control Center Phone: _____

BE PREPARED TO TELL THE POISON CONTROL CENTER:

- what's on the label of the substance ingested.
- how much was ingested.
- when it was ingested.
- what the victim's condition is.

WHAT THE POISON CONTROL CENTER MAY TELL YOU:

- Induce vomiting. Give the victim a spoonful of syrup of ipecac, available from any pharmacy. (*Always have a bottle on hand. Don't use salt water, vinegar, strong tea or a finger or spoon handle down the throat unless told to do so by a poison control expert.*)
- Do not induce vomiting. Some substances can burn the victim's throat and lungs when brought back up. Instead, you may be told to have the victim drink water or milk. Then, either phone for an ambulance or drive the victim to a hospital emergency department.
- If the victim is unconscious, start rescue breathing. If there's no pulse and you're trained in CPR, start that technique.

SYMPTOMS OF POISONING:

Don't wait for symptoms before calling a poison control center. Look for:

- open drugs, chemicals out of place or a partially eaten leaf.
- stains or odors on clothes or skin.
- sudden changes in behavior, such as drowsiness, pain or nervousness.

Once symptoms appear they may include:

change in skin color
convulsions
dizziness
drowsiness
nausea
redness on hands, face or throat
shallow breathing
stomach pain
unconsciousness

POTENTIALLY POISONOUS DRUGS AND NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS:

alcoholic beverages
antibiotics
antihistamines
aspirin or aspirin substitutes
cold medicine
cough medicine
deep-heating ointment
diet pills
hormone preparations
iron supplements
laxatives
painkillers
sedatives
sleeping pills
tranquilizers
vitamins

Never call medicine "candy" or say "it tastes good" to get children to take it.

- Throw out all expired prescription and over-the-counter medicines and containers on a regular basis.
- Throw out medicines that have crumbled or have a changed odor or color.
- Leave all unexpired medicines in their original containers with their labels intact.
- Ask for and buy only medicines with safety caps.
- Don't give or take medicines in the dark.
- Keep nonfood products, even vitamins, away from where food is stored or prepared.

POTENTIALLY POISONOUS PERSONAL PRODUCTS:

after-shave lotion
cologne
cosmetics
deodorant
moisturizer
mouthwash
perfume
suntan lotion
sunscreen

- Teach young children to always ask you before putting anything in their mouths: *"Even things that look good or smell good can hurt you."*

COMMON POISONOUS PLANTS:

azalea
daffodil
dieffenbachia
holly
mistletoe
oleander
philodendron
poinsettia
poison ivy
poison oak
poison sumac
poisonous mushrooms
rhododendron

All plants with a creamy or milky sap are probably poisonous, except dandelions.

- If you're directed to the nearest hospital, bring a sample of the suspected plant. If an ambulance is sent, give the plant sample to the ambulance attendants.
- Avoid all wild mushrooms.

POTENTIALLY POISONOUS HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS:

ammonia
antiseptics
bleach
cleanser
deodorizer
dishwasher detergent
dish-washing liquid
drain opener
garden chemicals
gasoline
glass cleaner
glue
hydrogen peroxide
insecticide
laundry detergent
lighter fluid
lye
paint
polish
rat poison
rubbing alcohol
soaps
solvents and thinners
spray cans
stain
toilet bowl cleaner

Almost all household substances are poisonous if used improperly, taken in large amounts or taken by small children.

- Never leave children unattended around household products, even to answer the phone.
- Avoid using products containing lead or lead-based paint.
- Keep household products in out-of-reach cabinets with childproof locks on them, not under the sink or at toddler reaching level.
- Always read cautions on labels.
- Never use food containers to hold poisonous products.

Poisonous Plants—

Protecting Kids From Unsafe Plants and Shrubs

Who would want to eat a house plant? A toddler would. Babies can be extremely curious and persistent—and they put just about everything they can grab into their mouths. Their sense of taste is often second only to their vision as a means of exploring the world. Unfortunately, because of this, house plants are the leading source of poisonings of children under the age of 1.

Which Plants Are Dangerous?

There are more than 700 species of plants, ferns and mushrooms that can cause toxic reactions in humans and animals. However, birds and animals may also be able to eat a plant that's not safe for humans, so when in doubt, don't experiment to see if a plant is safe. Avoid all wild mushrooms, even ones that look ready for your market's produce department. Also, as a rule of thumb, avoid all plants with a creamy or milky sap. They're probably poisonous. The only exception is dandelions, which are entirely edible and even nutritious.

Some plants are notorious for being unsafe to touch, such as poison oak, poison ivy and poison sumac. These can cause a severely painful and itchy rash, so an adult or older child who can recognize these plants needs to carefully supervise smaller children on hiking or camping trips.

If You Suspect a Poisoning From a Plant...

Common symptoms include stomach pain, diarrhea or vomiting. But don't wait for symptoms if you see a child eating a poisonous plant or find a partially eaten leaf near the child.

1. Call your poison control center.
2. If you're directed to the nearest hospital, bring a sample of the suspected plant.
3. If an ambulance is sent, give the plant sample to the ambulance attendants.

Precaution Is Your Best Defense

If you have a young child, keep plants off the floor and out of their reach. Don't forget that toddlers can be fearless and formidable climbers. Keep an eagle eye on kids outdoors, whether in your own yard or at a public park. A child just learning to walk or run may head straight to a poisonous plant to munch on.

COMMON POISONOUS PLANTS

- azalea
- castor bean
- daffodil
- deadly nightshade
- dieffenbachia
- holly
- jimsonweed
- laburnum berries
- larkspur
- mistletoe
- mountain laurel berries
- oleander
- philodendron
- poison sumac
- poisonous mushrooms
- pokeweed
- potato leaves
- privet berries
- rhododendron
- rhubarb leaves
- rosary pea
- yew